



D I V I N E
ENTERTAINMENT:
OR, THE
HERMIT.

A
P O E M.

Particularly recommended to the Perusal of the
MEMBERS of RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES.



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Particularly recommended to the Council of the
Masters of Maritime Commerce

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THE DOUBTFUL HERMIT.



AR in a Wild, unknown to publick View,
From Youth to Age a Rev'rend Hermit grew;
The Moss his Bed, the Cave his humble Cell,
His Food the Fruits, his Drink the Christal Well.
Remote from Man, with God he pass'd his Days,
Pray'r all his Bus'ness, all his Pleasure Praise.

A Life so sacred, such serene Repose
Seem'd Heav'n itself, 'till one Suggestion rose;
That Vice shou'd triumph, Virtue Vice obey,
This sprung some Doubt of Providence's Sway.
His Hopes no more a certain Prospect boast,
And all the Tenor of his Soul is lost:
So when a smooth Expanse receives impress'd
Calm Nature's Image on its wat'ry Breast,
Down bend the Banks, the Trees depending grow,
And Skies beneath with answ'ring Colours glow;
But if a Stone the gentle Sea divide,
Swift ruffling Circles curl on ev'ry Side,
And glimm'ring Fragments of a broken Sun,
Banks, Trees, and Skies, in thick Disorder run.

To clear this Doubt, to know the World by Sight,
To find if Books or Swains report it right,
(For yet by Swains alone the World he knew,
Whose Feet came wand'ring o'er the nightly Dew)
He quits his Cell; the Pilgrim-Staff he bore,
And fix'd the Scallop in his Hat before;
Then with the Sun a rising Journey went,
Sedate to think, and watching each Event.

The Morn was wasted in the Pathless Grass,
 And long and lonesome was the Wild to pass;
 But when the Southern Sun had warm'd the Day,
 A Youth came posting o'er a crossing Way;
 His Rayment decent, his Complexion fair,
 And soft in graceful Ringlets wav'd his Hair.
 Then near approaching, Father, Hail, he cry'd;
 And Hail, my Son, the Rev'rend Sire reply'd;
 Words follow'd Words, from Question Answer flow'd,
 And Talk of various Kind deceiv'd the Road;
 'Till each with other pleas'd, and loth to part,
 While in their Age they differ, join in Heart:
 Thus stands an aged Elm in Ivy bound,
 Thus youthful Ivy clasps an Elm around.

Now sunk the Sun, the closing Hour of Day
 Came onward, mantl'd o'er with sober gray:
 Nature in silence bid the World repose;
 When near the Road a stately Palace rose:
 There by the Moon, thro' Ranks of Trees they pass,
 Whose Verdure crown'd their sloping Sides of Grass.
 It chanc'd the noble Master of the Dome
 Still made his House the wand'ring Strangers Home.
 Yet still the Kindness from a Thirst of Praise,
 Prov'd the vain Flourish of expensive Ease.

The Pair arrive, the liv'ry'd Servants wait;
 Their Lord receives 'em at the pompous Gate.
 The Table groans with costly Piles of Food,
 And all is more than hospitably good.
 Then led to Rest, the Day's long Toil they drown,
 Deep sunk in Sleep, and Silk, and Heaps of Down.

At length 'tis Morn, and at the Dawn of Day
 Along the wide Canals the Zephyrs play;
 Fresh o'er the gay Parterres the Breezes creep,
 And shake the neighb'ring Wood, to banish Sleep.
 Up rise the Guests, obedient to the Call;
 An early Banquet deck'd the Splendid Hall;
 Rich luscious Wine a golden Goblet grac'd,
 Which the kind Master forc'd the Guests to taste.
 Then pleas'd and thankful, from the Porch they go;
 And, but the Landlord, none had cause of Woe;
 His Cup was vanish'd; for in secret Guise
 The younger Guest purloin'd the glitt'ring Prize.

As one who spies a Serpent in his Way,
 Glist'ning and basking in the Summer Ray,

Disorder'd

Disorder'd stops, to shun the Danger near,
 Then walks with Faintness on, and looks with Fear :
 So seem'd the Sire, when far upon the Road,
 The shining Spoil his wiley Partner shew'd.
 He stopp'd with Silence, walk'd with trembling Heart,
 And much he wish'd, but durst not ask to part :
 Murm'ring, he lifts his Eyes, and thinks it hard,
 That gen'rous Actions meet a base Reward.

While thus they pass, the Sun his Glory shrouds,
 The changing Skies hang out their sable Clouds :
 A Sound in Air presag'd approaching Rain,
 And Beasts to covert scud across the Plain.
 Warn'd by the Signs, the wand'ring Pair retreat,
 To seek for Shelter at a Neighb'ring Seat.
 'Twas built with Turrets, on a rising Ground,
 And strong, and large, and unimprov'd around :
 Its Owner's Temper tim'rous and severe,
 Unkind and griping, caus'd a Desert there.

As near the Miser's heavy Doors they drew,
 Fierce rising Gusts with sudden Fury blew ;
 The nimble Lightning, mix'd with Showers began,
 And o'er their Heads loud rolling Thunder ran.
 Here long they knock, but knock or call in vain,
 Driv'n by the Wind, and batter'd by the Rain.
 At length some Pity warm'd the Master's Breast ;
 ('Twas then his Threshold first receiv'd a Guest.)
 Slow creaking turns the Door with jealous Care,
 And half he welcomes in the shiv'ring Pair ;
 One frugal Fagot lights the naked Walls,
 And Nature's Fervor thro' their Limbs recalls :
 Bread of the coarsest Sort, with eager Wine,
 (Each hardly granted) serv'd 'em both to dine ;
 And when the Tempest first appear'd to cease,
 A ready Warning bid them part in Peace.

With still Remark the pond'ring Hermit view'd
 In one so rich, a Life so poor and rude ;
 And why shou'd such (within himself, he cry'd)
 Lock the lost Wealth a thousand want beside ?
 But what new Marks of Wonder soon took Place,
 In ev'ry settling Feature of his Face !
 When from his Vest the young Companion bore
 That Cup, the gen'rous Landlord own'd before,
 And paid profusely with the precious Bowl
 The stinted Kindness of this Churlish Soul.

But

But now the Clouds in airy Tumults fly,
 The Sun emerging ope's an azure Sky;
 A fresher Green the smelling Leaves display,
 And glitt'ring as they tremble cheer the Day;
 The Weather courts them from the poor Retreat,
 And the glad Master bolts the wary Gate.
 While hence they walk, the Pilgrim's Bosom wrought
 With all the Travel of uncertain Thought;
 His Partner's Acts without their Cause appear;
 'Twas there a Vice, but seem'd a Madness here:
 Deteresting that, and pitying this, he goes,
 Lost and confounded with the various Shows.

Now Night's dim Shades again involve the Sky;
 Again the Wand'ers want a Place to lie,
 Again they search, and find a Lodging nigh.
 The Soil improv'd around, the Mansion neat,
 and neither poorly low nor idly great:
 It seem'd to speak its Master's turn of Mind,
 Content, and not for Praise, but Virtue, kind.

Hither the Walkers turn with weary Feet,
 Then bless the Mansion, and the Master greet:
 Their greeting fair, bestow'd with modest guise,
 The courteous Master hears, and thus replies:
 Without a vain, without a grudging Heart,
 To him who gives us all, I yield a Part;
 From him you come, for him accept it here,
 A frank and sober, more than costly Cheer.
 He spoke, and bid the welcome Table spread,
 Then talk'd of Virtue 'till the Time of bed,
 When the grave Household round his Hall repair,
 Warn'd by a Bell, and close the Hours with Pray'r.

At length the World renew'd by calm repose
 Was strong for Toil, the dapple Morn arose;
 Before the Pilgrim's Part, the younger crept
 Near the clos'd Cradle where an Infant slept,
 And writh'd his Neck: The Landlord's little Pride,
 O strange Return! grew black, and gasp'd and dy'd.
 Horror of Horrors! what! his only Son!
 How look'd our Hermit when the Fact was done?
 Not Hell, tho' Hell's black Jaws in sunder part,
 And breathe blue Fire, could more assault his Heart.

Confus'd, and struck with Silence at the Deed,
 He flies, but trembling fails to fly with Speed.
 His Steps the Youth pursues; the Country lay
 Perplex'd with Roads, a Servant shew'd the Way;

A River cross'd the Path ; the Passage o'er
 Was nice to find ; the Servant trod before ;
 Long Arms of Oak an open Bridge supply'd,
 And deep the Waves beneath the Bending glide.
 The Youth, who seem'd to watch a time to sin,
 Approach'd the careless Guide, and thrust him in ;
 Plunging he falls, and rising lifts his Head,
 Then flashing turns, and sinks among the Dead.

Wild sparkling Rage inflames the Father's Eyes,
 He bursts the Bands of Fear, and madly cries,
 Detested Wretch ! ——— But scarce his Speech began,
 When the strange Partner seem'd no longer Man :
 His youthful Face grew more serenely sweet ;
 His Robe turn'd white, and flow'd upon his Feet ;
 Fair Rounds of radiant Points invest his Hair ;
 Celestial Odours breathe in purpled Air ;
 And Wings, whose Colours glitter'd on the Day,
 Wide at his Back their gradual Plumes display.
 The Form Etherial bursts upon his Sight,
 And moves in all the Majesty of Light.

Tho' loud at first the Pilgrim's Passion grew,
 Sudden he gaz'd, and wist nor what to do :
 Surprise in secret Chains his Words suspends,
 And in a Calm his settling Temper ends.
 But Silence here the beauteous Angel broke,
 (The Voice of Musick ravish'd as he spoke.)

Thy Pray'r, thy Praise, thy Life to Vice unknown,
 In sweet Memorial rise before the Throne.
 These Charms, Success in our bright Region find,
 And force an Angel down, to calm thy Mind ;
 For this commission'd, I forsook the Sky ;
 Nay, cease to kneel, ——— Thy Fellow-Servant I.

Then know the Truth of Government divine,
 And let the Scruples be no longer thine.

The Maker justly claims that World he made,
 In this the Right of Providence is laid ;
 Its Sacred Majesty through all depends
 On using Second Means to work his Ends :
 'Tis thus, withdrawn in State from human Eye,
 The Pow'r exerts his Attributes on High,
 Your Actions uses, not controuls your Will,
 And bids the doubting Sons of Men be still.

What strange Events can strike with more Surprise,
 Than those which lately strook thy wand'ring Eyes?

Yet

Yet taught by these, confess th'Almighty just,
And where you can't unriddle, learn to trust!

The *great, vain Man*, who far'd on costly Food,
Whose Life was too luxurious to be good;
Who made his Iv'ry Stands with Goblets shine,
And forc'd his Guests to Morning Draughts of Wine,
Has, with the Cup, the graceless Custom lost,
And still he welcomes, but with less of Cost.

The *mean, suspicious Wretch*, whose bolted Door
Ne'er mov'd in Duty to the wand'ring Poor;
With him I left the Cup, to teach his Mind
That Heav'n can bless, if Mortals will be kind;
Conscious of wanting Worth, he views the Bowl,
And feels Compassion touch his grateful Soul.
Thus Artists melt the sullen Oar of Lead,
With heaping Coals of Fire upon its Head;
In the kind Warmth the Metal learns to glow,
And loose from Dross the Silver runs below.

Long had our *Pious Friend* in Virtue trod,
But now the Child half-wean'd his Soul from God;
(Child of his Age) for him he liv'd in Pain,
And measur'd back his Steps to Earth again.
To what Excesses had his Dotage run?
But God, to save the Father, took the Son.
To all but thee, in Fits he seem'd to go,
(And 'twas my Ministry to deal the Blow.)

The poor fond Parent humbled in the Dust,
Now owns in Tears the Punishment was just.

But how had all his Fortune felt a wrack,
Had that *false Servant* sped in Safety back?
This Night his treasur'd Heaps he meant to steal,
And what a Fund of Charity wou'd fail!

Thus Heav'n instructs thy Mind: This Trial o'er,
Depart in Peace, resign, and sin no more.
On sounding Pinions here the Youth withdrew,
The Sage stood wond'ring as the Seraph flew.
Thus look'd *Elisba*, when to mount on High
His Master took the Chariot of the Sky;
The Fiery Pomp ascending, left the View;
The Prophet gaz'd, and wish'd to follow too.

The bending Hermit here a Pray'r begun,
Lord! as in Heav'n, on Earth thy Will be done.
Then gladly turning, sought his ancient Place,
And spent a Life of Piety and Peace.

